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ORATION

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION OF
FREE-MASON'S HALL
IN THE
CITY OF QUEBEC, .

BY ALEX^R: SPARK, A. M.

PUBLISHED AT THE REQUEST OF THE SOCIETY.

Sapientia ædificavit Domum suam; excidit Columnas suas septem.
Solomon.

~~BIBLIOTHEQUE~~
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QUEBEC, 3^d Nov. 1787.

AT a general Meeting of the Society of
FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS,
held this Day at FREE-MASON'S HALL in
the City of Quebec.

Resolved, That the Thanks of this Society
be given to the Reverend Brother SPARK,
for the Oration delivered by him at the De-
dication of this Hall; and that the GRAND
SECRETARY do wait upon Brother SPARK
to communicate to him this Resolution, and
to request a Copy of the Oration for the
Press.

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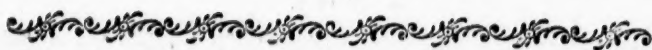
TO THE
RIGHT WORSHIPFUL,
THE
OFFICERS
OF THE
PROVINCIAL GRAND LODGE,
AND THE
SOCIETY OF FREE AND ACCEPTED MASONS
OF THE CITY OF QUEBEC:

*In Testimony of the warmest Acknowledgement
for the Honor they have been pleased to confer
upon the Author, the following ORATION
is respectfully inscribed, by their affectionate
Brother,*

And most obedient humble Servant,

ALEX^R: SPARK.

BELMONT, 12th Nov. }
1787.



A N
O R A T I O N

DELIVERED AT THE DEDICATION OF
FREE-MASON'S HALL
IN THE
CITY OF QUEBEC.

R. W. Grand Master, Brethren all, and illustrious Hearers,

I N every Art two things seem peculiarly deserving of attention, its Origin, and its Design. And perhaps there is none that can boast an Origin more ancient and venerable, or a Design more benevolent than that of Masonry.

WHEN

WHEN the Almighty Fiat first bade this visible Creation exist, as the sacred page informs us, it was without Form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the Deep: it was yet a rude and shapeless Chaos. But the Divine Architect stretched out the Line upon it, and reduced it to Symmetry and Order, so that we now behold the whole Fabric stand confest, a stupendous Monument of eternal Wisdom—its pillars invested with Strength and adorned with Beauty. Executed with Skill minute even below the Sight of the Philosophic Eye, and vast beyond the bounds of Imagination, it pronounceth its Author to be Divine. Such was the original Design of the Eternal Mind—and such we now behold the fair and magnificent Fabric of the Universe.

BUT had the Divine Architect here stopt short—had he not also given Being to another System, namely, one of an intellectual kind, not only had the most glorious and excellent part of the Divine Workmanship been left unfinished, but even that which

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was created might have remained for ever unnoticed and unadmired. Tho' the Fabric was beautiful and stupendous, it had been but like a deserted Mansion, without Inhabitant. Tho' the Picture was fair, and the Colours exquisite, yet none had been conscious of its Beauty, but he alone who first designed and made it.

As an Inhabitant, therefore, of this visible Creation, and a Witness of its Beauty and Magnificence, the great Author of Nature gave Being also to the intellectual System—he bade the human Intelligence exist, and be conscious of Good and Evil, of Beauty and Deformity, of Virtue and Vice. As the former System was made the grand Model of visible Order, of Measure and Proportion, so was this last the Subject of moral Beauty and Rectitude. The one is the Object of SCIENCE and the other of MORALITY: and these, if I mistake not, are the two grand Pillars of the Masonic Art. On these its solid Basis rests, and hath ever rested unshaken and unimpaired. Thus, it claims an Origin

gin coëval with the World; and its professed Design is to promote Civilization, and to adorn human Life with every scientific and moral Accomplishment.

By what remote Cause—or by what Chain of Causes or Accidents, Mankind originally formed for Virtue and Society, were led to pervert the intention of their Nature, and to lose the proper Means of Improvement—how they were first divided amongst themselves, became rude in their Manners, hostile to their own Species, ignorant and unsociable, it is not our present business to enquire; suffice it here to observe that the Fact itself is unquestionable, and that the immediate visible Cause is the neglect of Science and Cultivation. Almost in every Nation, at some particular period of its History, Men have been found rude as the Marble in the Quarry; possessing indeed a Capacity of moral Beauty, and of the fairest proportions of Virtue, but requiring the skilful Hand of Art and Culture to form and polish them. Such we are informed,

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were the ancient Inhabitants of Greece (afterwards the most polished Nation in the World) before its savage Tribes were tamed by the harmonious Lyre of an Orpheus. And such are the Inhabitants of every Nation, while yet unenlightened by Science—untaught and unexperienced in the exalted Virtue of Benevolence—and unconscious of the sacred Bonds of social Union. Wild as the Woods in which they roam, and fierce as the Animals with which they herd—their clothing the Spoils of the Chase, and Dens their only Shelter. Such is the Picture of human Life unenlightened by Science, and unadorned by Art and Cultivation.

IN the midst of this Chaos of intellectual Nature, behold Masonry, whose task it is to enlighten and to adorn—behold the Heaven-born Virgin appear, bearing in her Hand the Lamp of Science, the Mirror of Truth, with the various Ensigns of Art;—Joy smiling in her Countenance, the fair semblance of Virtue and internal Peace. Steadily regarding the Beauty and Symmetry of the Divine Work-

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manship,

manship, both in the visible and intellectual World, and fired with a noble Enthusiasm to examine and to imitate; from the former she derives the various Arts and Ornaments of Life, and from the latter the Rules of social Duty. She teacheth Mankind to perceive that they were formed for Society, and that there their Nature can reach the highest Perfection and Happiness. She bids them lay aside the fierceness of an hostile Disposition,—and teacheth Men of every Nation, of every different Faith, and of every Rank in Life, overlooking the Prejudices and Distinctions, which Education or Fortune may have established, to embrace one another like Brethren, and to give the Soul to Harmony and Love.

UNION adds Strength to Enterprize, and Fire to Genius and Invention. Under the Culture of her Hand, we therefore, soon perceive the various Arts and Embellishments of Life, improved and disseminated. Where lately all was Waste and Deformity, we now behold the stately Dome arise, and display its magnificent Ornaments. The rude and
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shapeless Marble assumes Form and Proportion, and Nature's fairest Tints seem to live on the Canvas. Lo! Music also, attended by soft Poësy her Sister Art, gives to Harmony the trembling Strings, and wakes the Soul to ecstasy; whilst the mighty Tide of bold majestic Verse tames the Savage Breast, and forms it to Humanity and Love. This is the Labour, and this the Pride of Masonry, by such Arts as these to adorn Life, and to humanize the Temper.

HEAVEN, well pleased, first view'd the bold and generous Design, with a look of soft Complacency, then blessed the Enterprize, and bade the Virgin proceed and prosper. Attended by Soft-eyed Charity her inseparable Companion, we now therefore behold her travelling down the Vale of Time, hung round with the most venerable Relicks of hoary Antiquity, and crowned with the richest honors of every preceding Age, that with the same Munificence, and the same benevolent Hand, she may yet bless and adorn Posterity.

THIS,

THIS, my worthy Brethren, and illustrious Hearers, is but a faint and general Outline of the Origin and Design of the Masonic Art. Time would fail me to descend to particulars. But could it be thought requisite, in order to reflect honor on a Society so ancient and venerable, I might yet mention the many distinguished Characters who have composed and patronized it, in every Age. From the wise King of Israel, who, on Masonic Principles, first built a Temple to the God of Jacob, down to the present time, it boasts a Line of Worthies,—of Kings and Heros—of the great, the good and the wise in every Nation, whose Names would do honor to any Society. To rehearse them here would be tedious, and it is unnecessary. But every Mason of this Assembly will doubtless consider it as a fortunate and pleasing Circumstance, that under an Officer of the Royal Blood,* the most important Office belonging to Masonry, within the Realm of Great Britain, should, at this Day, be discharged

* Duke of Cumberland Grand Master of England.

by

by a Nobleman of the most distinguished Character,† so nearly allied to the Noble Lord who presides over this part of the British Empire, and who now honoreth us with his Presence and Patronage.

Spencer Perceval, Lord of the Treasury.

WERE it necessary that I should here specify any particular Example of that charitable Disposition, which hath ever characterized the Fraternity as a collective Body, I should, my worthy Brethren, mention your own late Exertions in raising a Fund of Charity in this City, as a recent Example of a Benevolence truly Masonic. And I gladly embrace this Opportunity to congratulate you on the present advanced State of that Charity, and the pleasing Prospect of seeing it soon completed. This House, now dedicated to Masonry, to Virtue, and to universal Benevolence, and appropriated solely as a Fund for the relief of Indigence, will serve as an additional and recent Testimony to the World, of the humane Disposition which actuates a Society of

† Earl of Eppingham.

FREE-MASONS. But it must often also recall to your Remembrance the irreparable Loss, which you in particular, and the Society in general have sustained, by the much lamented Death of our late worthy, Right Worshipful Grand Master,* by whom this Charity was chiefly promoted. To his Activity and Zeal, under the Blessing of Heaven, the Poor are principally indebted for the Benefit and Assistance which, it is hoped, they will long derive from it. While Masonry, therefore, holds her sage Assemblies, or celebrates her mystic Rites, under this Roof, she shall mention his Name with Delight, and often consecrate a Tear to his Memory.

PERMIT me farther, my Brethren, to congratulate you on the Satisfaction which every one of you must now feel, at having in any degree contributed to so laudible a Design. Surely to be in any measure instrumental in removing Sorrow from the Hearts of our fellow Creatures—in shielding the

* Col. Carleton late Provincial Grand Master of Canada.

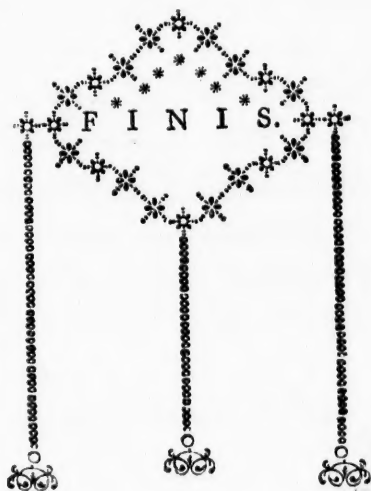
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Innocent from Insult and Oppression—or in wiping the Tear from the Eye of Misery, cannot but upon Reflection, yield the most solid Delight. What can contribute more to our own Enjoyment of ourselves than to see others made happy by our Means? The Joy and Satisfaction are reciprocal. What we bestow in Charity well applied, we receive in Self-complacency, and in the approbation of Conscience, which pours upon the Soul the joy and radiance of Heaven!

THUS hast thou, great God of Nature! annexed the most solid Joy and Happiness to Virtue, and ever closely united our Duty with our Interest. With one Heart, and one Accord, we now therefore lift up our Eyes unto thee, thou Sovereign Disposer of Events, humbly imploring thy Divine Blessing, and most gracious Assistance, to second all our Endeavours to alleviate the Distresses of the Indigent, and to dispense Joy and Happiness to our fellow Creatures. Oh! thou Parent of Goodness, make us truly sensible of the exalted Pleasure of doing Good,
and

and let our Labour of Love be crowned with abundant Success. To thee we look for Assistance and Direction in all our Undertakings; and our Souls rejoice in thy Dominion.

“ Hail universal Lord, be bounteous still
 “ To give us only Good”——And—
 “ To thee whose Temple is all Space,
 “ Whose Altar, Earth, Sea, Skies,
 “ One Chorus let all Being raise,
 “ All Nature’s Incense rise.”



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